

Preaching Perspectives: James
Seventeen Expository Sermon Outlines

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*** TROUBLES (1:2-12)

I Troubles Are Many & Simply Part of Life (1:2)

- A. Attitude: “Count it all joy”
- B. Anticipation: “When you fall”
- C. Different forms or flavors: “Divers”
- D. Outward troubles: “Temptations”

II Troubles Can Be Meaningful (1:3-4)

- A. They produce “patience”
- B. They develop character - “that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing”

III Troubles Can Be Mastered (1:5-8)

- A. How to handle them: “let him ask of God . . .”
- B. Expect God to answer: “in faith nothing wavering . . .”
- C. Comparison: “like a wave of the sea . . .”

IV Troubles May Involve Money (1:9-11)

- A. The lack of money is common to many: “the brother of low degree”
- B. Faith in God is the way to be “exalted”
- C. The rich who trust in riches rather than God will be “made low” and merely “pass away.”

V Troubles May Be Measured in Light of Eternity (1:12)

- A. The word “blessed” speaks of an inner quality of happiness which comes from God – not affected by outward situations.
- B. When troubles are handled from God’s perspective (“endureth temptation”), they produce the superior life.
- C. “Crown of life” means a quality of life (joy, victory, honor) which begins now & continues forever.

*** TRACKS OF TEMPTATION (1:13-16)

I The Certainty of Temptation (1:13)

- A. Not “if” but “when.”
- B. To tempt means “to allure or entice to danger.”

II The Cause of Temptation (1:13-14)

- A. Some blame the devil.
- B. Some blame God.
- C. Some blame heredity, environment, parents, spouses, etc.

- D. God says it is within us: “our own lusts.”

III The Consequences of Temptation (1:15-16)

- A. When we do not resist temptation, it leads to “sin & death.”
- B. Consequences are certain and severe.

IV The Cure for Temptation

- A. I Corinthians 10:13
- B. 2 Peter 2:9
- C. 1 John 2:2
- D. Hebrews 2:17-18

*** A CONSISTENT GOD (1:17-18)

I God Never Changes in Regard to His Philanthropy (1:17)

- A. Philanthropy means “helpfulness to humanity.”
- B. God is the source of “good” in this world.

II God Never Changes in Regard to His Personhood (1:17)

- A. God’s character: “Father of lights”
- B. Variation occurs among created heavenly bodies but not the Creator of those heavenly bodies.

III God Never Changes in Regard to His Power (1:18)

- A. His saving/regenerative power (“of His own will He begot us”)
- B. This takes place “by the word of truth.”
- C. The Bible must be what is preached – not fads or even self.

IV God Never Changes in Regard to His Purpose (1:18)

- A. Consecration: “firstfruits among His creatures.”
- B. Cooperation.

*** THE NEW LIFE: HEARING THE WORD (1:19-21)

I Swift to Hear (1:19)

- A. Nowhere is “hearing” more important than in regard to “the Word of truth.”
- B. Romans 10:17 – Hebrews 11:6.

II Slow to Speak (1:19)

- A. A follow-up from “hearing.”
- B. Proverbs 10:19 – 13:3 – 17:29 – 29:20
- C. How often have we later regretted when we spoke too soon.

III Slow to Wrath/Anger (1:19-20)

- A. Not all anger is bad or inappropriate.
- B. Examples: teachers, preachers, parents, etc.
- C. Inappropriate anger may cause more harm than good.

IV Humility or Gentleness of Heart (1:21)

- A. There are things to “get rid of” or discard.
- B. There are things to “receive” or embrace.

*** THE NEW LIFE: HEEDING THE WORD (1:22-25)

I The Admonition (1:22)

- A. To “receive the Word” (v. 21) is *the root*. To “be doers” of the Word is *the fruit*.
- B. Deception may occur in this regard.
- C. The purpose of “hearing” the Word is not to be pleased with a good sermon but to profit from its message.
- D. Christianity is the art of the practical.

II The Analogy (1:23-25).

- A. The mere “hearer” *glances* carelessly, hastily, briefly, even disinterestedly & soon “forgets” what he heard (1:23-24).
- B. The actual “doer” of the Word takes serious, eager, and meaningful *gazes* into the Word on a continual basis.
- C. Here is one who “obeys” what is heard.
- D. Such a one is “blessed.”

*** FAITH and FRUIT in RELIGION (1:26-27)

I The Christian Religion is Regulated by Speech (1:26)

- A. Ephesians 5:19 – James 4:11 – James 1:19
- B. The “tongue” is a member of the human body and it must be “controlled.”
- C. Matthew 12:34/Luke 6:45
- D. This language is exceedingly strong. Matthew 12:36-37

II The Christian Religion is Regulated by Service (1:27)

- A. “Pure and undefiled” service to the needy.
- B. Jesus spent His life on earth in such service (Acts 10:38).
- C. We cannot substitute religious rituals, ceremonies, and elaborate buildings in place of service.
- D. The basis of judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

III The Christian Religion is Regulated by Spotlessness (1:27).

- A. This is a call for purity in one’s personal life.
- B. Spiritual warfare is the lot of those who follow God.
- C. The Christian religion knows no other acceptable kind of worship apart from a loving, serviceable, holy life.

*** DISCRIMINATION: PERSPECTIVES ON PEOPLE (2:1-13)

- I An Evil Pronounced (2:1)
 - A. What it is: “respect of persons”
 - B. An evil the Bible condemns: Lev. 19:15; Mal. 1:8-9; 2:9; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25
- II An Example Portrayed (2:2-7)
 - A. Rich man – Poor man
 - B. This reveals “doubt” about the Christian faith.
 - C. In the early church, it was the rich who abused the name of Christ.
- III An Exception Permitted (2:8)
 - A. An objection based on the law which they are actually breaking.
 - B. Love of wealth is not what the law commands.
- IV An Exclusion Prohibited (2:9-11)
 - A. The whole law was the will of God.
 - B. Compare with human courts.
- V An Emphasis Prescribed (2:12-13)
 - A. One’s speech and actions reveal one’s moral state.
 - B. “The law of liberty” frees us from sin to obey God.

*** SAVING FAITH (2:14-26)

- I It is Profitable (2:14-17)
 - A. It profits the one who has it (2:14)
 - B. It is profitable to others (2:15-17)
- II It is Proveable (2:18-26)
 - A. A fruitless faith is unproveable because there are no results.
 - B. Objection
 - C. Mere intellectual belief is demonic.
 - D. One’s lifestyle or conduct provides the needed evidence.
 - E. Examples of such in Abraham (2:21-23) and Rahab (2:25).

*** THE TONGUE (3:1-12)

- I The Tongue is Powerful (3:1-5)
 - A. Speech is used in “teaching” and should not be entered into without maturity.
 - B. Examples: “bits in horses’ mouth” – “rudder of ship” – “small spark to start great fire”
- II The Tongue Can Be Poisonous (3:5-8)
 - A. “Tongue is the world of iniquity” & “defiles the entire body” (cp. Mt. 15:11)

- B. “Tongue sets the whole course of one’s life on fire” by corrupting relationships from birth to death.
- C. “Tongue is set on fire by hell” – kindled by the devil
- D. It cannot be tamed by man.

III The Tongue Must Be Policed (3:9-12)

- A. It has inconsistent and contradictory potential.
- B. Illustrations of inconsistency.
- C. Only Jesus can master the tongue – To be in a relationship of deep fellowship with Him is absolutely necessary for victory in this regard.

*** WISDOM (3:13-18)

I False Wisdom (3:14-16)

- A. Characteristics: “Bitter – envying – strife – glory not” (v. 14) - “earthly – sensual – devilish” because it is “not from above” (v. 15)
- B. Consequences: “confusion & every evil work” (v. 16)

II True Wisdom (3:17-18)

- A. Characteristics: “pure – gentle – easy to be intreated (that is, reasonable) – full of mercy & good fruits – without hypocrisy” because it is “from above” (v. 17)
- B. Consequences: “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (v. 18) – Mt. 5:8

*** SELFISHNESS (4:1-10)

I Selfishness Divides People (4:1-2)

- A. Fruit: “wars and fightings among you” – disharmony in the church
- B. Root: “lusts that war in your members” – “lusts” refers to “pleasures” which are made the aim in life rather than Jesus Christ.

II Selfishness Distorts Prayer (4:3)

- A. Harmful in our horizontal relations with others.
- B. Harmful in our vertical relations with God.
- C. “Consume” is same word in Lk. 15:14 about the prodigal son who wasted himself in pleasures.

III Selfishness Disobeys God (4:4-6)

- A. Spiritual adultery: blind & deaf to the value of spiritual concerns & the will of God; governed by “the lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16); patterns itself after worldly customs; preoccupied with worldly fame/fortune.

- B. God is a jealous lover & does not tolerate rivals.

IV Selfishness Demands Penitence (4:7-10)

- A. Ten calls to make changes/repent.
- B. By doing so, God “lifts up” those who so “humble” themselves in His sight.

*** SLANDER (4:11-12)

I Slander is Prohibited (4:11a)

- A. The principle of avoiding selfishness and having humility before God calls for humble-mindedness toward fellow Christians.
- B. Psalm 15:3

II Slander is Perversion (4:11b)

- A. “Judging” begins in the heart and reveals itself by “speaking” from the mouth which are violations of the law of love (Lev. 19:18; Jms 2:8).
- B. Slander means we are not “doers of the Word.”

III Slander is Presumptuous (4:12)

- A. Presumptuous means “to assume or take for granted without permission.”
- B. Slander means to pass judgment on someone, a right that belongs only to God.
- C. We demonstrate arrogance and ignorance when we try to play God.

*** A PRESCRIPTION FOR PRESUMPTION (4:13-17)

I Avoid Arrogant Confidence (4:13)

- A. This is directed to worldly-minded merchants and money-makers who disregard God.
- B. A mindset that everything is fixed/settled.
- C. Resembles the attitude in Luke 12:16-21.

II Acknowledge Absolute Certainty (4:14)

- A. The duration of life is so uncertain.
- B. We do not know what the future holds.
- C. It is, therefore, important to be “doers” of the Word.

III Apply Accurate Counsel (4:15-17)

- A. Our times are in God's hands and we should plan life with God and His will in mind.
- B. Mt. 10:29
- C. 1 Corinthians 4:19; 16:7
- D. We should only "boast" in God. Philippians 3:3; Galatians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 12:9
- E. Those who ignore these truths are guilty of "sin."

*** THE MISTAKES OF MATERIALISM (5:1-6)

- I Deceptive Laboring for Things Which Do Not Last (5:1-3)
 - A. Wealth is fleeting & subject to the destructions within time.
 - B. Ignoring the needs of others is a crime.
 - C. Judgment falls on those who use material goods selfishly.
 - D. The world does not go on forever.
- II Defrauding Laborers of Appropriate Wages (5:4)
 - A. Greed is a special form of cruelty.
 - B. Defrauding laborers demonstrate inhumanity to man. Malachi 3:5
 - C. God hears the cries of those mistreated.
- III Deluded Laboring for Pleasure and Power (5:5-6)
 - A. Luxury and self-indulgence is a poor pursuit.
 - B. Luke 16:19-31
 - C. Expect torment in the next life.
 - D. The selfish pursuit of riches dulls our ears to God's voice and displeases Him immensely. 1 Timothy 6:10

*** STEDFASTNESS (5:7-12)

- I The Exhortation Behind Stedfastness (5:7-8)
 - A. The return of Jesus Christ is the basis for steadfastness.
 - B. 1 Peter 4:8-9; 1 Corinthians 16:14, 22; Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 2:28
 - C. Analogy of farmer
- II The Examples of Stedfastness (5:10-11).
 - A. Examples serve to encourage.
 - B. These OT examples of stedfastness from the past should inspire us to be stedfast in the present.
 - C. God rewards stedfastness.
- III The Exclusions within Stedfastness (5:9, 12)

- A. Avoid complaining against each other.
- B. Avoid swearing or using oaths which is the wrong way to use God's name.
- C. Matthew 5:33-37; 12:37

*** PRAAYER (5:13-20)

- I Pray Experientially (5:13-15)
 - A. Pray in the experience of "suffering."
 - B. Pray "praise songs" in the experience of "cheerfulness."
 - C. Pray in the experience of "sickness."
- II Pray Earnestly (5:16a)
 - A. Prayer is to accompany "confession of faults."
 - B. Prayer is to be accompanied by sincerity and confidentiality.
- III Pray Energetically (5:16b)
 - A. Prayer should be "fervent" and have energy with it.
 - B. Prayer moves God to action. 1 Samuel 1:13; Isaiah 38 Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6
- IV Pray Expectantly (5:17-18)
 - A. Elijah prayed expectantly that it "would not" rain.
 - B. Elijah prayer expectantly that it "would" rain.

*** WORDS ABOUT WANDERING (5:19-20)

- I Recognize the Possibility of Wandering (5:19)
 - A. The people of concern: "brethren."
 - B. To "err from the truth" occurs when Christians go astray or away from God's will and the principles of attitudes and actions set forth in the Bible – and the ones James has addressed in this letter. As he has already noted in 3:2, "in many things we all offend."
- II Reclaim the Person Who Wanders (5:19)
 - A. Do not castigate but reinvigorate, motivate, and reinstate. Cp. Luke 22:32; Galatians 6:1.
 - B. Reclaim with genuine concern, saturated with prayer, and in conjunction with his "err from the truth" [of the authority of God's Word in his life] and thus about "the error of his way."
- III Rejoice in the Pardon From Wandering (5:20)

- A. To “convert” and “save” means to restore to full enjoyment of and participation in fellowship with God and His intended ways of life.
- B. Psalm 32:1 – 1 Peter 4:8
- C. Those who wander from the fold are forgiven by God and should be forgiven by God’s people. The bloopers are cancelled and the blessings lead to congratulations by fellow-believers.
- D. Restoration of wandering believers is not a part-time or occasionally optional hobby but a full-time vocation. This is part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
- E. In the words of the hymn, “What a fellowship, what a joy divine, learning on the everlasting arms!”